



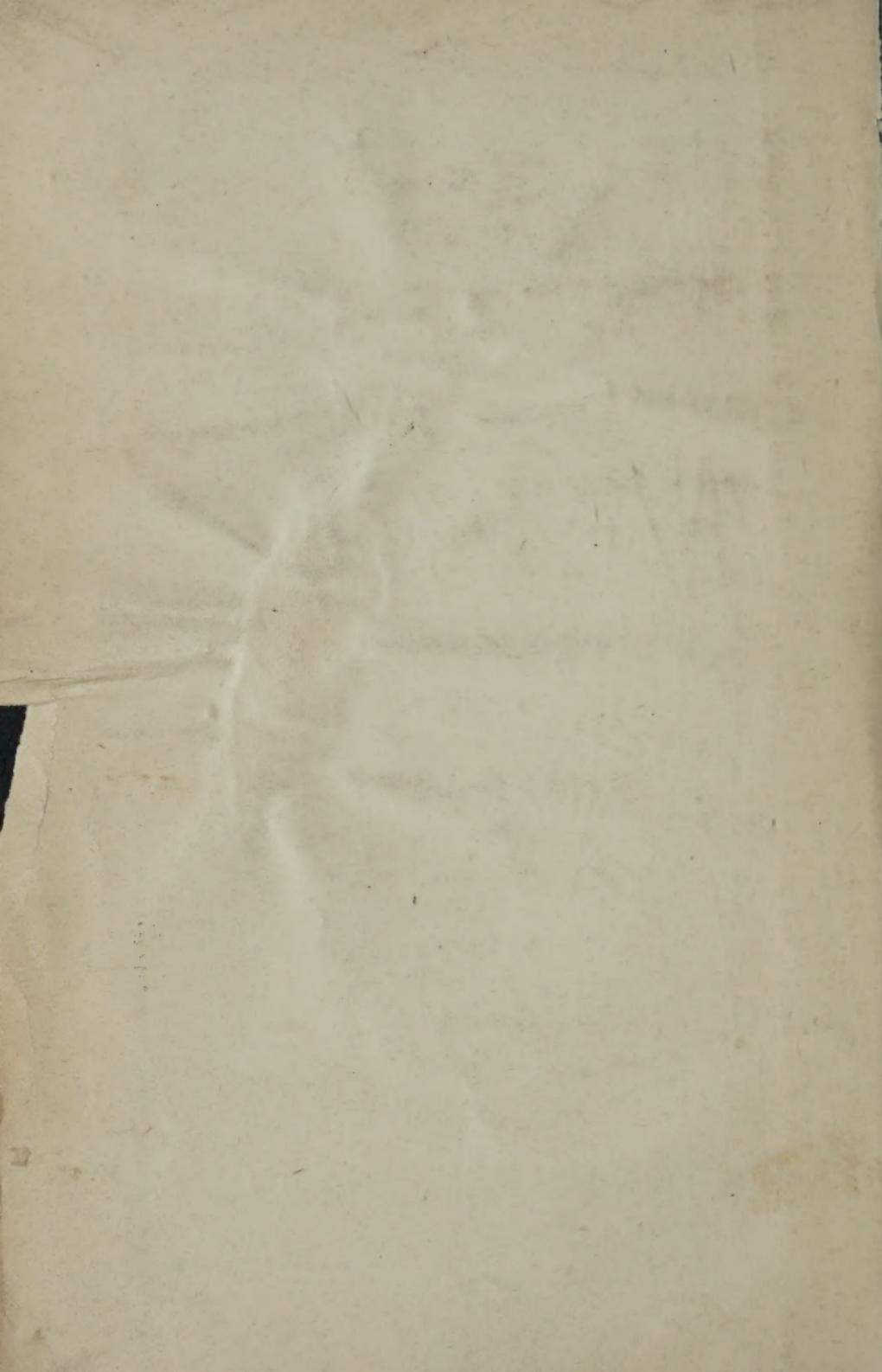
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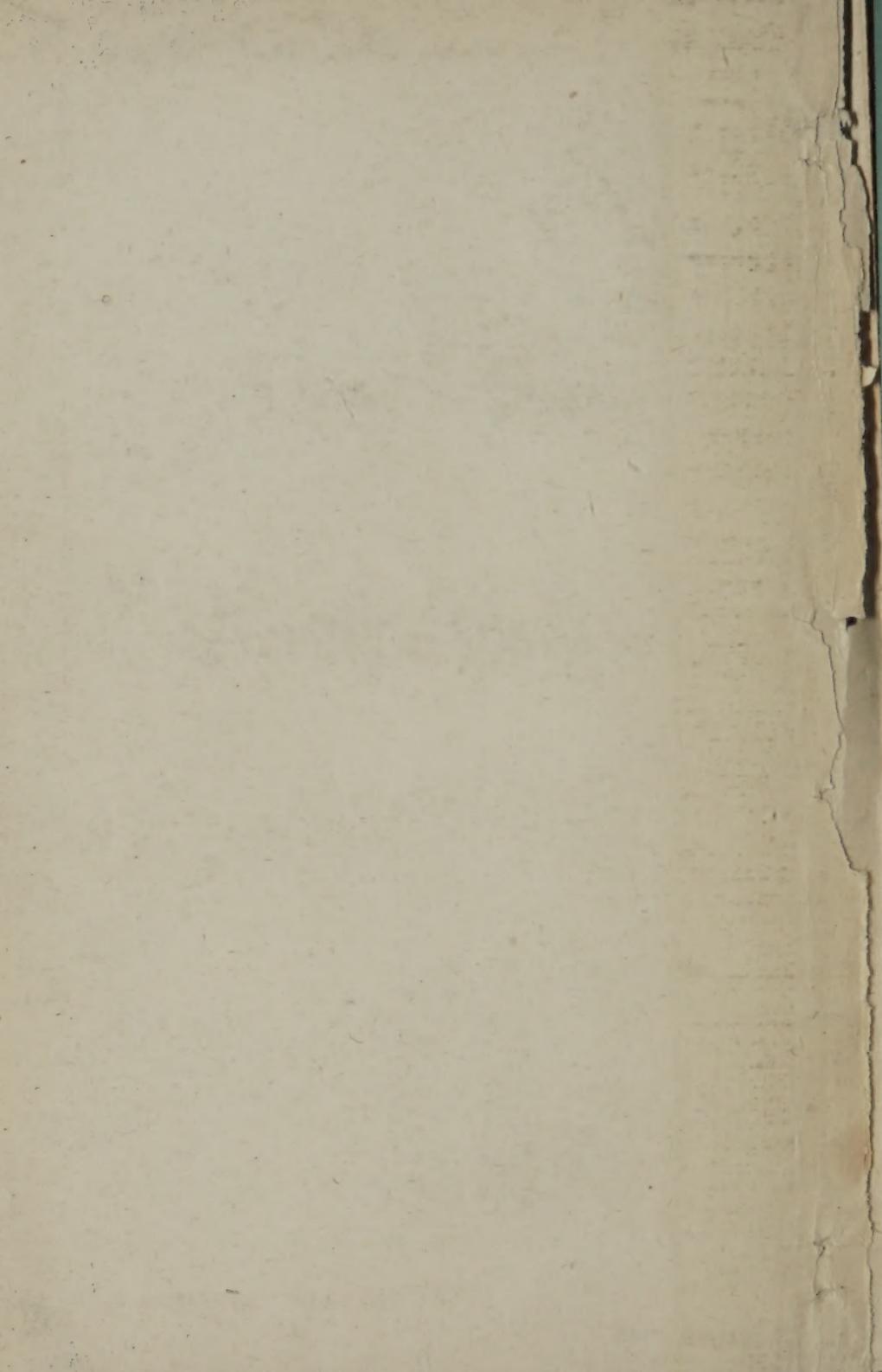
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H E L P  
FOR  
YOUNG REPORTERS.

GIVING FULL DIRECTIONS FOR REPORTING IN ALL ITS BRANCHES  
ALSO CONTAINING AN EXPLANATION OF THE PROPOSED  
REVISION OF ENGLISH SPELLING.

BY

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*Teacher of Shorthand at Cooper Union, and Principal of the  
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## SHORTHAND.

### HELP FOR YOUNG REPORTERS.

#### PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The London *Times* says, "Coal, Heat, Gas, Electricity, and Shorthand, are powers which have transformed the face of the world."

Sir W. Armstrong in speaking on the subject of Shorthand, said,—"The facility now given to the transmission of intelligence and the interchange of thought is one of the most remarkable features of the present age. Cheap and rapid postage to all parts of the world; paper and printing reduced to the lowest possible cost; electric telegraphs between nation and nation, town and town, and now even between house and house—all contribute to aid that commerce of ideas by which wealth and knowledge are augmented. But while so much facility is given to mental communication by new measures and new inventions, the fundamental art of expressing thought by written symbols remains as imperfect now as it has been for centuries past. It seems strange that while we actually possess a system of shorthand by which words can be recorded as rapidly as they can be spoken, we should persist in writing a slow and laborious longhand."

"The practical question is, whether we shall continue to write in the same manner and at a similar speed to that of our ancestors; or whether, in accordance with the genius of the times, we shall adopt, or cause our children to adopt, a system of writing which shall more nearly accord with the fluency of speech."

Believing that Steno-Phongraphy or Phonic Shorthand needs only to be known in order to secure not only the admiration, but the most cordial support of every friend of scientific and literary improvement, we feel confident that a

knowledge of it is the strongest argument that can be put forth in its favor. None can thoroughly appreciate the art but those who have had practical experience in its use. Let us proceed to examine the difficulties which now surround the ordinary writer.

### SHORTHAND WRITING AND PRINTING.

In entering upon the study of a new Science, and especially one that proposes a change in the present system of things, it is well that the student should be made acquainted with the advantages and benefits that are likely to arise from it, and with the reasons and arguments upon which its claims are founded.

The utility of the arts of writing and printing will be acknowledged by all. The human race is in fact more indebted to this than to any other, if not more than to all other arts put together, for the present state of advancement and intelligence. It is indeed one of the principal distinctions between a savage and an enlightened people that the latter have a written language and printed books, while the former have none; and let any nation or tribe of people once have their language reduced to writing and have printed books to circulate among their people from which they may obtain knowledge, and then will commence the progress of civilization and improvement; and on the other hand, if the most enlightened people on the earth were to lose the art of reading and writing, they would soon pass back again into a savage and barbarous state. Seeing, then, that these arts are essential, not only to the happiness and improvement of mankind, but even to their existence in a civilized state of society, any improvement that will render a knowledge of them "attainable to millions to whom they are now unattainable," will not only be hailed with joy by all who wish to see man advance to that state of perfection which is to be his final destiny on earth, but will confer a lasting benefit on all succeeding generations. Such an improvement is Phonography and Phonotypy,—now generally known as "The Spelling Reform,"—as a few facts will clearly show.

The English language contains 40 simple or elementary sounds, and 4 compound sounds that it is desirable to have represented, while we have but 26 letters in our alphabet; so that after assigning to each letter a single sound, there are 18 sounds left that have to be represented by letters already in use, rendering spelling and pronunciation illegible. The truth, however, is far worse than this. There is not a letter in our alphabet but represents more than one sound, and some of them 8 or 9.

Take for example the sounds of *a* in the following sentence: "Many comparing this man with his father fall into the mistake that he wants little of being *an* image of him." Here are no less than 9 different sounds represented by the same letter without any change in its form to indicate the changes of sound.

Again, take the sound of *e* in this sentence :

Let her leave her burden at the rendezvous and show the clerk her pretty tame mouse.

Here are at least 8 different sounds represented by the same letter still retaining the same form, and examples might be given, showing that every other letter of the alphabet represents several different sounds. The whole number of sounds represented by all the letters and combinations of letters amounts to no less than the enormous sum of *five hundred and fifty-three*, while we have no need of more than *forty-four*. But here is no regularity even in this, for, on the other hand, the same sound is represented by many different letters and combinations of letters. The sound of *a* in the word *fate*, has at least 20 different representations; of *e* in *feet*, 23; of *i* in *pine*, 17; of *o* in *bone*, 16; of *u* in *use*, 17; and the forty-four sounds of our language are represented in no less than *three hundred and seven'y-nine* different ways. From such a changing of sounds, and so many different modes of representing the same sound arises the present difficulty of learning to spell and pronounce correctly. As soon as the child has learned its alphabet, we commence teaching it to spell, first, in words of two letters, such as *pa, ba, fa, ma, &c.*, giving to each of the letters their full sound, but when it is afterwards shown these

same letters in the words *pat, bat, fat, mat*, it must change the sound of *a*, although it still retains the same form, and in the words *pall, ball, fall, mall*, &c., we give it another sound, and in *par, bar, far, mar*, &c., another still, and the same is true of all the other letters in the alphabet, the confusion being greater in the vowel than in the consonant sounds. Most persons will, perhaps be surprised to learn that out of eighty-five thousand words in our language, only about *sixty or not one in a thousand* are spelled as they should be, that is all the letters having their alphabetic sounds. This jargon of sounds together with "a standing army of silent letters," some of which are stationed in almost every word, are well calculated to confound and bewilder the minds of learners, and to mar the progress of knowledge and improvement. Such, indeed, is the irregularity that prevails, that no rules can be given in orthography that are of any benefit whatever, and the child or foreigner that wishes to learn English, has to *commit the spelling and pronunciation of the whole language to memory*. No wonder, then, that, "learning to spell and read is a very difficult affair—a very tedious, troublesome, wearing, mind-afflicting business; disheartening to the master and repulsive to the pupil; occupying years of toil, years that give many a distaste for books, and are consumed in a kind of drudgery, which makes the boy sigh for holidays. For not only have the effective letters of our alphabet a variety of meanings, but they are used in such a capricious manner, so utterly disregardful of all analogy—all expectation, that it is, as we have seen, totally impossible for even a practical English reader to guess, with any approach to certainty, what may be meant for the pronunciation of any words which he has not previously seen, or how to write any word which he has only heard and never seen written."

But let us inquire for a remedy for this difficulty. The only true and practical mode of representing any language, is to have an alphabet containing a letter, or combination of letters, as in the German, for each elementary sound of the language, and let that letter or combination represent no other sound.

Then whenever we hear a word pronounced, we can at once determine the sounds of which it is composed, and can consequently spell the word, and whenever we see a word printed or written, we know the sounds of the letters and can, therefore, pronounce the word. Such an alphabet has been presented to the world, and is called the Anglo-American Alphabet. The two styles of printing are so near alike that persons read it quite easily at first sight.

The following extracts will show the estimation in which Spelling Reform is held by the highest educational and scientific authorities both in this country and in England:

Alexander John Ellis, A. B., Fellow of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, Honorary Member of the English Phonographic Society, author of the Alphabet of Nature, etc., says:

1. There is not one single sound in our language which is on all occasions represented by one uniform letter or combination of letters.
2. The 44 sounds of the Phonographic Alphabet, are in our present orthography, represented by no less than 379 equivalents, consequently the child has to learn by heart the mode of spelling every single word in the language.
3. At present it takes years for a child to learn to read with tolerable accuracy.
4. It takes many more years before he is able to spell.
5. No one ever knows *with certainty* how to spell a word which he has only heard, and has not seen printed or written.
6. No one ever knows *with certainty* how to pronounce a word which he has only seen and never heard.
7. Very few can or do at all times spell every word with which they are familiar, correctly.

When Spelling by Sound comes into general use—

1. Children of six or eight years of age will be able to learn to read in a week.
2. Those who can now read our present system may learn to read in ten minutes.

3. No difficulty will be experienced in spelling any word which can be pronounced with accuracy.
4. No doubt will be experienced as to the proper pronunciation of any word which meets the eye.
5. Every one will be able to spell as correctly as he pronounces.
6. An elegant and uniform standard of pronunciation will be introduced.
7. Our language which is one of the simplest in its grammatical construction of any in the world, will be rendered accessible to the whole of mankind, and will be much more extensively read and spoken.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, The American Philological Society, and other learned bodies have appointed special committees to investigate the subject; and after a thorough examination of it, they have unanimously adopted and published strong argumentative reports in favor of a system of Phonetic Spelling, in which we find the following sentiments :

1. It may be acquired in one-fifteenth part of the time necessary for the present.
2. When acquired, it leads the learner to the correct pronunciation of every word he meets with.
3. It dispenses entirely with the difficult, and to most persons, impossible acquisition of learning to spell. A knowledge of the just sound suggests infallibly the true spelling, and the spelling with equal certainty the correct pronunciation.
4. By the omission of silent letters it renders reading one-fifth more rapid than at present.
5. It will render the acquisition of reading and spelling attainable to *millions* to whom it is now unattainable.
6. It will enable a writer to represent any proper name, or word of an unknown language, in such a manner as to be read by a stranger with precisely the same pronunciation which the writer gives it, inasmuch as the variations of sound are made visible to the eye.

7. It will tend to banish provincialisms, as each written word suggests its correct pronunciation.

8. By representing the long and short vowels by different letters, it renders possible the adoption of a few perfectly simple and comprehensive rules of accent, a thing which up to this time has been nearly wanting in the language.

The following humorous poem, a parody on Hamlet's soliloquy, "To be, or not to be," is given as a specimen of the Anglo-American print :

### LERNING STENOGRAPHY.

---

Tu lern, or not tu lern, that iz the question;  
 Whether 'tiz nōbler in the mind to sufer  
 The complex quiblz ov ambigūus longhand,  
 Or tu opoze with pen and vois a thouzand erorz,  
 And by opōzing end them. Tu lern,—tu rite,—  
 And, by Stenografy, tu say we end  
 The faulsityz, the thouzand tēdious ils  
 Long-hand prodūsez ; tiz a consumashon  
 Devoutly tu be wisht. Tu rite,—to lern ;—  
 Tu lern ! but then tu wurk ;—äi, thare'z the rub ;  
 For, tu aquire this art, whot toil may cum  
 Eer I can shufl off my habits old,  
 Shūd giv me pauz ; thare'z the respect  
 Which makes Orthografy ov so long life;  
 For hoo wud bare the inūmerable ilz ov Long-hand,  
 Its barbarus length, its ambigūty,  
 Its chīld tormenting dificultyz, and  
 Its *wont ov rule*, tugether with the toil  
 Which pāshent scribez ov such a sistem hav,  
 When he himself mite his releesment make,  
 By lerning Shorthand ? Hoo yet wud uze  
 This barbarus relic ov our bygon dayz,  
 But that the dred ov sumthing tu be lernd,—  
 (That week unmanly eez, from hooz embrace  
 No lāzy man can get)—puzlz the wil,  
 And makes him rāther bare een faulsityz,  
 Than lern the trūth he yet nōz nothing ov.  
 Thus indolence too oft retardz the mind ;  
 And thus the progres ov a useful art  
 Iz chekt, but not prevented; for the time  
 Wil cum when this same breef Stenografy  
 Shal trīumf o'er its final oponent.

It will be seen that the fonetic print so nearly resembles the common, that there is little or no difficulty in reading it. It is simply spelling brought to rule by the consistent use of the ordinary letters of the Roman Alphabet, and the addition of a few marked or double letters—the latter being termed, digraphs. The marked letters and digraphs ar employed chiefly to denote the long vowels and a few consonant elements.

The 40 or more elementary sounds being thus provided with a separate representation, useless letters are ommited and the words are spelled by sound. For present use, however, in order to preserve as strong a resemblance as possible between the ordinary and phonetic print, alternativ letters are allowed, as shown in the subjoined alphabet. This Alphabet is appropriately termed "The Anglo-American" for several reasons. The English and American nations must unite, to effect a revision of spelling. The plan here given is a result of the labors of Spelling Reformers on both sides of the Atlantic. Mr. E. Jones, of Liverpool, England, and Mrs. Eliza B. Burnz, of New York, both Vice Presidents of the Spelling Reform Association, aided by Mr. Joseph Medill of the *Chicago Tribune*, have unitedly arranged and advocated this sensible method of simplified spelling. The tendency of Spelling Reform is in this direction—to introduce no new letters, but to make the old ones, with a few diacritic marks, suffice for phoneticising the written and printed language. And even this mininium change in the representation of English will doubtless come by slow degrees. The first step, made by friends of the reform, is writing and printing the three words *hav, giv, liv*.

The second is the observance of the following "5 Rules for New Spellings," adopted by the Spelling Reform Association, and recommended for general use:

1. Omit *a* from the digraf *ea* when pronounst as e-short, as in *hed, helth*, etc.
2. Omit silent *e* after a short vowel, as in *hav, giv*, etc., except words ending in *ce* or *ge*.
3. Write *f* for *ph* in such words as *alfabet, fantom*, etc.
4. When a word ends with a double letter, omit the last, as in *shal, clif, eg*, etc.

5. Changs *ed* final to *t* where it has the sound of *t*, as in *lasht*, *imprest*, etc. Some newspapers and individuals hav made special lists of words which they ar willing to spel fonetically. Let every one help to the extent of his convictions.

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### ANGLO-AMERICAN ALFABET.

WITH EQUIVALENT LETERZ FOR A TRANSIZION PERIOD.

<i>Inishal or Medial; sum Final.</i>	<i>Final.</i>
a—bäker; ai—aim; a-e—name.	ay—may
a—at, cap, away, alayz.	
ä—fäther; a—ar, card; <sup>1</sup> ah—ah!	a—Eva. <sup>2</sup>
å—älso; au—august; o—order; <sup>3</sup> a—all. <sup>4</sup>	aw—saw. <sup>5</sup>
b—babe, bel, tub.	
c—cup, crömo, mūzic; q—quil; <sup>6</sup> k—kik <sup>7</sup> .	
ch—church, march.	
d—dust, mud.	
e—ëvil; ee—deep; e-e—theme.	ee—see.
c—end, met, ferst, mersy. <sup>8</sup>	
f—fog, tuf, fizic, cauf; Ph—Philo.	
g—gun, mug. h—home, herbage.	
i—íland, mínd; ie—driez; i-e—kite.	y—dry', deny'.
i—in, sip.	y—many. <sup>9</sup>
j—joke, rejister, charjer.	ge—charge. <sup>10</sup>
l—lul, mil, filial.	
m—mat, meny, campain.	
n—nest, runing, gun.	
ng—long, singer; ñ—fiñger; n—sink. <sup>10</sup>	
ö or œ—öld, bony; o-e—denote, ore; oe—goez. o—go, dito. <sup>11</sup>	
o—on, sory, profes. <sup>12</sup>	
oo—tool, yoo. oi—oil, invois, noiz.	oy—boy, enjoyz.
ou—out, count.	ow—cow, cowz.
p—pope, dipt.	
r—rite, rits (duez, ?), furl, poor.	

s—sun, gas, asid, lasitude.	ce—pence. <sup>13</sup>
sh—shape, shugar, vishus, pùsh.	
t—tiket, tizic.	
fh—think, pithy, breth.	th—them, breeth.
ü or u—düty; eu—eufony; u-e—dispute.	ue—virtue;
u—us, cup, wurk, furz. <sup>8</sup>	
ü or u—put, gùd, wùd; u—tu, playful. <sup>14</sup>	
v—vex, every, activ.	
w—wil, wun, dwel.	
wh—when, whisl, while.	
x=ks=ax, extra, exit; “egzamin,” ets. with gz.	
y—yet, yeer; i—question, familiar. <sup>15</sup>	
z—zone, bizy, aliez; X—Xerzez, Xenofon.	
zh—roozh; z—vizual, vizion <sup>16</sup> .	

### SPESHAL RULEZ.

The folōing speshal rulez, subject to revizion az thay may be found faulty, wil enabl the riter or compozitor tu uze the Anglo-American Alfabet freely and consistently. The small figurez, intersperst fhroo the alfabet abuv, refer tu theze rulez.

1. ä—a, before *r* not folōd by a vowel, takes the sound ov ä and need not be markt.
2. ä—a, when final, soundz like shortend ä.
3. a—Before *r*, not folōd by a vowel *o*, haz the sound ov aw.
4. ll—ll modifiez a preseeding *a*, making it aw.
5. aw—aw iz retained before aded silablz.
6. qu—qu iz the equivalent ov cw.
7. k—k iz uzed when its sound occurz before ē, e, ī, i; also at the end ov monosilablz, and iz retaind before a sufix.
8. e—e reprezentz the natūral vowel *u*, before *r*, in wurdz in which that sound iz now denōted by *e*, *i* or *y*, az “mercy, sir, myrrh;” while *u* iz employed in wurdz whare the same sound iz now denōted by *o* or *u*, as “word, curb.”

9. y—Final *y* iz retaind before all sufizes; but *y· chānjez tu ie* before an added consonant; az “deny, denies, denied.”
10. n—*n* natūraly takes the sound ov *ng* before *k* in the same silabl.
11. ö—Except in “to,” no short vowel soundz terminate wurdz, but *i*, and *a* sounding short ä; therefore unmarkt *e, o, u*, when uzed in ending wurdz, wil denote their respective long soundz.
12. o—Unacsented *o*, which iz a short sound, can be denōted by *o·*
13. ce, ge—The use ov *ce* and *ge* for *s* and *j* shuld be restricted tu thoze soundz when final, unles the aded silabl beginz with a consonant.
14. ū—“To” =tū, occurring so frequently, may be riten without the mark over *u*, az also the aded silabl “ful.”
15. y—In *ion* az in sum uther cāsez the proper sound carez for itself.
16. zh—Before ū and *i, z* becumz *zh*.

Unmarkt siñgl vowel leterz denote short soundz. For the long soundz it iz best to uze a markt leter räther than a dīgraf whenever the equivalent dīgraf wùd lengthen the wurd, and when the mute *e*, which lengfhenz the sound ov the unmarkt character becumz vocal by an aded leter; az “bite, bīter.” Whenever marked leterz ar not at hand the equivalent dīgraf may be uzed. The reprezentashon ov an obscure or doutful sound iz, for the prezent, best left unchanjd from the comon speling. A few wurdz ar riten exepshonaly, az “off, thou, ôn, aye,” becauz utherwize thay sudjest a rong wurd tu the non-fonetic reeder. Proper namez ar left unchanjd.

In the Anglo-American print, wurdz ar speld by sound, and useles leterz ar omited, az propozed in every fonetic skeme; but a leter which servz tu modify anuther leter under a serten rule iz not considered useles, tho it may be deemed silent. Thus the final *e* modifiez a prēseeding unmarkt vowel by māking it denote its long sound; it prezervz the ūzual appeerance ov the wurd and savez the riting ov the dīacritic mark.

**WRITTEN LANGUAGE.**

Not only is the printing of our language extremely defective and difficult to learn, but the writing of it is equally, if not more so. A perfect system of writing requires :

- 1st. To be plain and legible, or easily read.
- 2nd. To be easily learned.
- 3rd. To be capable of being written with the rapidity of speech.

Our present system is defective in at least two of these particulars. After spending several years in learning it, we may read it with some degree of facility; but that is all that can be said of it. It requires years of practice to learn it, and to write it with anything near the rapidity of speech, is altogether out of the question. The characters are every one complex, that is, they require several motions of the pen to form them, and we often have to make from two to six of these complex characters to represent a single sound. Thus, for example, in writing the word *ache*, which has but two sounds, we must make four letters, requiring fourteen motions of the hand and pen. In writing the word *tongue*, which has three sounds, we must make six characters requiring twenty-one movements; and in writing the word *though*, which has but two sounds, we must make six characters, requiring twenty-three movements of the pen.

An examination of the Phonic Shorthand alphabet, however, will show it to possess these qualities in an admirable degree.

1st. Every sound of the language has its own peculiar sign to represent it, which never represents any other—hence it is plain and easily read.

2nd. The simplest possible forms are given to the characters, and those sounds which are nearly alike are represented by characters as near alike, and those which are entirely different by characters as different, which renders it easily learned.

3rd. There is no sign except the four diphthongs which requires more than one motion of the hand to form it, and the consonants, which are the articulate sounds or frame work of words, are represented by long characters which can be

easily joined together without lifting the pen, until the form of the word is completed, while the vowels which are the musical, euphonious sounds, are represented by small characters placed near to, but not joined to the consonant signs, so that in rapid writing we may first trace out the consonant outlines of words (which are sufficient to enable us to read them after a short practice,) and afterwards fill in the vowels at our leisure. Hence the astonishing rapidity with which Phonic Shorthand can be written; some stenographers who use this system having written more than 200 words per minute, while the average rate of speaking is only about 120 words per minute. Such are a few of the advantages of the system. We feel confident that it possesses claims of no ordinary character upon all who wish to see a general diffusion of knowledge among all ranks and classes of society, and that it may become thus diffused, we publish this brief exposition of its principles. We now proceed to give some valuable information to aid those young people who desire to begin the study of Phonic Shorthand, or who have already mastered it to some extent. For this purpose we shall draw considerably on "The Reporter's Guide," a work by Mr. T. A. Reed, one of the most expert English Phonographers:

#### A REPORTER'S QUALIFICATIONS.

Properly to fulfil the duties of a reporter requires good natural abilities, and, to say the least, a tolerably good education. Persons not possessed of these advantages would, as a rule, be ill prepared to meet the exigencies of a reporter's life. They might possibly obtain occasional employment in some subordinate department of reporting work, but they would, in all probability, earn less by it than at their own special calling. But there is a great difference between amateur and professional reporting. The former may be made a pleasing pursuit, and will be found useful to all who practice it with moderate care and industry; the latter can never be followed by an uneducated person without discredit to himself and his employers; for even if, by means of considerable practice, he

should acquire a fair amount of stenographic power, he will be always liable to blunders of the most absurd character in the transcription of his notes for the press.

It is of course impossible to state the precise amount of education needed by a newspaper reporter; but it is not difficult to indicate the subjects on which he should possess a moderate amount of information. We have seen it gravely stated that nothing less than a collegiate education is required to fit the reporter for the varied duties of his calling. If this were the case very few reporters could lay claim to competency. Not one in twenty, even among those employed on first-class journals, has had the benefit of collegiate training; and comparatively few can boast of a good classical education. It is needless to say that these advantages cannot fail to secure to their possessor a greater measure of success than he could hope to attain without them; but it is quite a mistake to suppose that they are indispensable to the reporter. We have known excellent classical scholars who have made very indifferent reporters; and could point to many of the most expert and intelligent members of the craft who never construed a line of Virgil, and could not go through a tense of a Greek verb to save their lives.

A knowledge of Latin cannot be otherwise than serviceable to the reporter. In almost every kind of public oratory Latin quotations now and then occur, and the ability to write them down as uttered, or so much of them as will afford the means of reference to the source whence they have been taken, will always be a valuable acquisition. The best informed reporter may now and then find himself compelled to seek the assistance of the speaker as to some unfamiliar quotation, or some technical expression; but to be obliged to ask his aid in the matter of a common-place quotation or phrase which the merest smattering of Latin would suffice to render intelligible —this is a position in which no intelligent reporter with any amount of self-respect would willingly place himself. Still less will he venture on transcribing the words from his notes, however accurately he may appear to have caught them, if he

does not know their meaning or is not perfectly assured as to their orthography. It is true that a brother reporter is sometimes at hand who can give the requisite assistance, and there is commonly sufficient *esprit de corps* amongst the members of the fraternity to lead them to lend a helping hand in case of need; but even such aid is not always available, and the result is that the uninformed reporter is compelled to omit a quotation which he would have gladly preserved, or he may be betrayed into some such perversion of the words as a scribe is said to have perpetrated when a member of Congress said, "*Amicus Plato, Amicus Socrates, sed major veritas,*" and which, to the speaker's bewilderment, was rendered in a newspaper on the following day, "I may cuss Plato, I may cuss Socrates, said Major Veritas!" If, however, Latin has not been acquired in youth it is almost hopeless to expect that any great proficiency in the language will be attained at a later period in life. But every reporter, if he does not delay the effort till business or family cares and responsibilities engross the time not occupied in his professional labors, may and ought to acquire at least the elements of the language, and to familiarize himself with Latin quotations which are constantly met with in both reading and speaking. This will involve no great labor; and it will well repay whatever mental exertion it may cost.

With regard to Greek, it is best that every reporter should at any rate learn the alphabet, and a few of the common roots that enter so largely into the composition of scientific terms. These can be acquired with but little labor, and the knowledge will assuredly prove serviceable.

One of the most important branches of knowledge which the reporter can cultivate is history. Many allusions are made in speeches to historical events and personages which would greatly embarrass a reporter ignorant of them. Every reporter should of course be familiar with the history of his own country, and not altogether unacquainted with that of foreign countries, ancient and modern. He should also know the names at least of the principal authors in the various departments of science and literature; and whatever information he may be able to acquire on the subjects of which they treat

cannot fail to be serviceable to him in his profession. A reporter should seek to be somewhat informed on a large number of subjects, even at the risk of his knowledge being but superficial, rather than pursue only two or three studies. It is impossible, unless he be an Admirable Crichton, that his knowledge should be at once deep and varied ; and *for professional purposes* he will find even a smattering of many subjects far more useful than a profound acquaintance with a few.

Especially should a reporter be cognizant of the important events passing around him in his own and other countries. To this end he should be a diligent reader of the newspapers. In these days of telegraphs and special correspondents, he need be at no loss in regard to current history. Allusions to passing events, both at home and abroad, are so frequent in public addresses of all kinds, especially in those of a political character, that a reporter would be continually at fault who should not be familiar with them. Besides, as a contemporary historian himself, as the reporter has rightly been called, it would be positively shameful if he suffered himself to be ignorant of the history of the world beyond his own immediate locality.

A little legal knowledge is indispensable to most reporters. This, however, they can hardly fail to acquire in the course of their professional practice. They are frequently required to attend law courts; and in order to be able to furnish accurate and intelligible reports, it is necessary that they should understand somewhat of the forms of legal proceedings and the principal technical terms employed in connection with them.

Not the least important qualification for a reporter is a good physical constitution. The profession of a reporter is in many respects a laborious one, and it should never be adopted by persons who are unable to bear a considerable amount of bodily fatigue. A reporter has sometimes to take full notes of a meeting or a trial for six or seven hours or more, without intermission. This is not only a trying exercise of the mental faculties, but it is a severe task for the bodily powers, to which no man would be equal who did not possess the *mens sana in corpore sano*. In busy seasons many reporters work fourteen

or fifteen hours a day, and if this is continued for weeks together, with occasional sitting up through the night, even a robust constitution will have to summon all its power of endurance to its aid.

With regard to the age at which shorthand should be commenced, we can only say the earlier the better. An intelligent lad might begin at thirteen or fourteen; and, if a reporter's life is in contemplation, it should not be delayed beyond sixteen or seventeen. Many persons, however, do not give the subject a thought till some years later. The acquisition of shorthand is then a matter of greater though not insuperable difficulty. No precise age can be stated as a limit beyond which it is useless to enter upon the practice of shorthand; much of course will depend upon the mental and physical peculiarities of the learner.

Presuming that a good system of shorthand has been selected, let me say at once that nothing but steady, persevering labor will enable the writer to employ it with success. Shorthand writing is mainly a question of practice. The best system will be of little service in the hands of an indolent practitioner; the worst may be made available by industry and intelligence. The question is constantly asked, "How long will it take me to follow a speaker?" It is more easily asked than answered. As in the case of a language or a musical instrument, one person will accomplish more in three months than another will master in a year. Few persons can make any considerable use of shorthand with less than six months' practice. That should, in most cases, suffice for the acquisition of a tolerable facility—not that required by the professional shorthand writer, but sufficient for most of the purposes of a newspaper reporter or an amanuensis. No reporter should be content with less than the ability to take a verbatim note of a moderately slow speaker; if he acquires this, and can write with ease and certainty at the rate of 120 words a minute, he will rarely be at a loss even with a much more rapid speaker; for if he is unable to secure a strictly verbatim note, he will very nearly attain that result, and, by the omission of the less

important portions of the speech, will miss very little that the public cares to read, or that the speaker himself would desire to see reproduced,

But a word of caution is here needed. Nothing is more common than for a shorthand student to deceive himself as to his real rate of speed. He has perhaps managed, under favorable circumstances, and by a great effort, to write 120 words in a minute from dictation, and he forthwith concludes that he has achieved all that is necessary in this respect. When, however, he tries his skill on some easy speaker he finds his pen, like David Copperfield's, staggering about as if in a fit; the speaker leaves him hopelessly in the rear, and when he comes to decipher his imperfect note, even the words that he has managed to write are scarcely more intelligible than a cuneiform inscription. Let it be distinctly understood that an occasional trial for one or two minutes is valueless as a criterion of speed and accuracy. Nothing less than half an hour's continuous writing should be regarded as a satisfactory test; and even this should not give confidence if any considerable difficulty is experienced in reading the shorthand characters. The learner should now and then try his powers by writing for half an hour or more from dictation or from a speaker, and then lay his notes aside for some days in order that they may be transcribed or read without the aid which the memory commonly affords. Let him not be discouraged if he finds, as it is probable he occasionally will, that some of the characters are unintelligible, and that many of his renderings, when compared with the original, are inaccurate. This is the common experience of shorthand students, and it is this which leads so many to abandon the art after a few months' practice. If the writing cannot be easily deciphered, the student must not hastily imagine, as very many have done, that shorthand is undecipherable. He should rather conclude that he has not written the characters with sufficient care; that he has given the reins to his desire for speed, instead of holding them with a tight hand. He must retrace his steps, be content for a time to write more

slowly, and resolve not to be betrayed into writing a single form so carelessly as that it will be likely to prove a stumbling-block in reading. In his early efforts he cannot be too careful in preserving the exact shapes and positions of letters; first, because this is essential in training the hand to accuracy of form; and secondly, because he has not learned by experience where and to what extent a departure from the exact outline may be safely allowed. When he has acquired this experience he may, to some extent, lessen the force with which his brain has been regulating and checking the movements of his impatient fingers, and permit them to dash forward at a pace which would have been impolitic when they were ignorant of the perils of a rapid flight. The difference between a careful and a careless writer is that while both may write rapidly, and indulge in departures from alphabetic forms, rounding angles, and extemporizing abbreviations, the one knows where he may do this with safety, and keeps within reasonable limits; the other puts no restraint upon his erratic tendencies, and consequently tumbles into innumerable pitfalls.

Whatever system of shorthand is employed, the writer will soon discover that, in spite of his best endeavors, characters will now and then present themselves to him under a double or treble aspect, so that he is perplexed as to which of the several meanings he is to assign to them. This arises mainly from the practice of omitting the vowels, and expressing only the consonants. In Phonic Shorthand the ambiguity to which this practice necessarily leads is to a great extent removed by contrivances admirably adapted to the purpose; but even these are not always sufficient to insure absolute freedom from doubt. The student should carefully note the "clashings" which will be sure to occur in his practice; and if his text-book provides no means of distinguishing the words, he must endeavor himself to supply the deficiency. The practice of omitting the vowel signs entirely is very much to be deprecated. Safely as they can be dispensed with in the majority of words, they are at times absolutely indispensable, either for the purpose of expressing some unfamiliar word which the

consonants alone would not suffice to recall, or to distinguish between certain words having the same consonants by different vowels.

When the learner is able to write some sixty or seventy words a minute, and to read them with facility, he should embrace every opportunity which presents itself of following a speaker, always beginning if possible with a slow one, and never feeling discouraged even by repeated failures. However little is written, every effort should be made to write that little carefully and well; and as soon as the writer is able to attend to the sense of the words, as well as to the mechanical expression, he should endeavor to retain the important words, and omit only those of a subordinate character, preserving, if possible the continuity of the discourse. This will be found at first somewhat difficult of attainment, but practice, guided by intelligence, will not fail in this as in other departments of labor to make perfect. There is some danger, however, that when this ability to preserve the important parts of a speech has been acquired, the young practitioner, pleased with his new attainment, may relax his efforts, and fail to achieve the object of his early ambition—the power to take a verbatim note. Especially is this likely to be the case if he is called on to put in practice his reporting powers in a professional way for some local paper. It may be that he is able, even at this early period of his career; to supply quite as full a report of a lecture or meeting as the newspaper requires; and, instead of being stimulated by his success to increased exertion, he is content to rest on his oars and shrink from the drudgery requisite to give him a facility of writing, which, however enviable, may, after all, be rarely called into exercise. But such indolence must be shunned by all who aspire to excellence in the reporting art.

We have said that the reporter should not be content with a speed of less than 120 words a minute. This is usually stated to be the average rate of public speaking. The estimate is somewhat under the mark, and many speakers average not less than 150 words in a minute. Few persons, however, speak

for any length of time at a uniform rate; the slowest utterance is now and then exchanged for a rapid flow of words: 180 or 200 words in a minute is no uncommon speed in certain styles of speech, such as the conversational, it may be continued for a few minutes, but the reporter who aspires to the highest excellence should be able to seize the most rapid passages, which are sometimes the most effective, and therefore the most worth recording. It is not every one, however, who is willing or able to devote the necessary time to the attainment of this speed; and many persons would never acquire it with a life-long practice. Most persons with average intelligence, air education, and a free use of the pen, may, with steady, persevering labor, write with certainty at the rate of 140 or 150 words a minute, provided always that the task be commenced at a tolerably early period of life.

If the stenographic student has not frequent opportunities of reporting public addresses, he should write as much as possible from dictation.

Mr. Reed says, in the *Shorthand Magazine*, "I wrote a few pages of phonography every day; and I was in the habit of setting myself some definite task to accomplish, and spreading the work over so many days or weeks. To this habit, perseveringly followed, I attribute some portion, at any rate, of the success I was able subsequently to achieve in facility of writing. One of my first labors was the writing of the Psalms from dictation. For this purpose I secured the services of a little boy who read fluently, and who (for a consideration) was willing to exercise his vocal powers for my behoof. It was dreary work at first, and two or three psalms a day was all that we accomplished. But we soon progressed, and by the time we had reached the last psalm my juvenile dictator would read in a deliberate, impressive manner without being stopped more than once or twice in a page. This task ended, I was a little puzzled what next to undertake. I thought of writing out the New Testament; but, to tell the truth, my reader was getting a little tired of theology, and was evidently anxious for a change. Wishing to interest him in the work, so that ne

would not be likely to shirk it, I resolved upon procuring as exciting a tale as I could find, and writing it from his dictation. I was fortunate in my selection; it was a three volume novel, the main incidents of which were placed in the backwoods of America, and were highly seasoned with terrible conflicts, narrow escapes, murder, love, treachery, suicide, and the like. I never had the slightest occasion to seek the services of my reader, who, whenever a leisure hour presented itself, invariably came to my side, with the book opened at the place where he had left off. We must have killed two or three Indian chiefs every day. We were constantly getting into the most horrid complications from which there seemed no hope of escape, and had often to leave off at those tantalizing places where in our popular periodicals we are accustomed to read, 'To be continued in our next.' Nothing could have been more fortunate for myself than the adoption of this method. In a month or two we had actually got through the three volumes. It was difficult to get my assistant to read sufficiently slowly, especially when we got among tomahawks and scalps; and, not wishing to be perpetually checking him, I had many a hard chase after the words as they fell from his lips. I nevertheless wrote every word of the book in phonography, and now and then devoted an hour or two to the reading of my notes, and correcting whatever errors I discovered. Of so much value did I find this mode of practice that I have constantly recommended it to others. There is nothing so conducive to satisfactory progress as the undertaking a definite task which is likely to extend over some considerable time, and resolutely going through with it. Effort put forth in a fragmentary way will always be more or less wasted; while the methodical, persistent pursuit of a well-marked out course will never fail of success. I strongly advise, then, every beginner to choose some book likely to be interesting or useful to himself and the reader, and to write every syllable of it from dictation. It may be slow and wearisome work at first, but every day, or at any rate every week, will make a sensible difference, and a considerable increase of speed will reward the patient toil."

It is customary with many shorthand writers and reporters, even when taking full notes, to omit many of the little connecting words—especially articles, prepositions, and conjunctions, which are not necessary to the completion of the sense, and which can be supplied in transcribing. To those who have not attained great mechanical facility, this is almost a matter of necessity when following a speaker whose utterance is only moderately rapid; and to the most expert stenographers the temptation of omitting some four or five hundred words in half an hour's reporting, if it can be done with safety, is not easily resisted. But we cannot recommend the practice. The beginner, when endeavoring to secure as much as possible of a speech, which he cannot follow verbatim, will naturally omit such words as he thinks he can afterwards supply; and it is better that he should do so than run the risk of losing the more important parts of the speech. But as he advances in his practice, and acquires additional speed, he should endeavor to write every word, omitting only when the speed of the speaker renders it absolutely necessary, or when taking notes for a condensed report.

Most authors of treatises on shorthand recommend their students to omit more or less extensively and systematically all the short, unimportant words; and exercises are occasionally given in which such omissions are made, in order to test the ability of the student in supplying the missing words. In some methods of shorthand the length of the system necessitates the exclusion. But this habit of systematic omission is extremely hazardous, and no writer of a really brief system such as Phonic Shorthand should cultivate it. In fact there is no necessity for such omissions, and the habit often leads to serious errors that might be avoided.

In taking notes, the reporter should endeavor to keep within five or six words of the speaker. He should be able, indeed, to write a dozen words behind in case of necessity; but as a rule it is desirable to keep moderately close to the speaker, so as to be the better prepared for any of those sudden starts which often take young reporters by surprise, and leave them hopelessly behind.

Whatever system of shorthand is employed, the student should write on ruled paper, which checks a very common tendency to a large, awkward, sprawling style, when the writer is following a rapid speaker. The lines should be about half an inch apart.

Both pen and pencil should be employed in practice. For taking full notes, the pen is the more useful instrument. The transcription of pencil notes, especially at night, is often very trying to the eyes.

The advantages of clear and indelible characters in ink is well worth the trifling additional labor involved in occasionally dipping the pen into the inkstand. In taking brief notes, making memoranda, etc., the pencil will be found the most convenient.

A reporter, though habitually using ink, should never be without a pencil in his pocket, for use in case of accident to pen or inkstand. It may now and then happen that shorthand notes have to be taken in the dark. In this case, a pencil is preferable to a pen, as it is necessary to dip the latter instrument very frequently in the ink lest the supply should fail without the writer perceiving it.

The best pens are good steel or gold pens. It is sometimes difficult to obtain a thoroughly good gold pen to suit the hand, but when this desideratum is secured, it may be regarded as a life-long treasure. Use it for writing shorthand only.

When using a pen, a smooth and moderately thick paper is the most suitable ; a rougher surface is better adapted to a pencil. Reporters' note-books are of various shapes and sizes. As convenient a size as any is seven and a half inches long and four and a half inches wide. They may be made up in thin sections, and placed in a reporting case with an elastic band ; or the sections may be regularly bound in cloth, forming books about three-quarters of an inch in thickness. The former method is generally adopted by newspaper reporters, and the latter by professional shorthand writers, who usually keep their notes and index them for reference. Note Books are kept in stock by BURNZ & Co., No. 24 Clinton Place, New York.

**TRANSCRIBING NOTES.**

Assuming that the first step has been satisfactorily taken—that a fair degree of proficiency has been acquired in the art of shorthand writing, it must not be supposed that everything that follows is plain sailing. In the practical application of the art many difficulties present themselves to the reporting student, which nothing but intelligence and perseverance will overcome. It is of very little use to take shorthand notes, if you do not know what to do with them when taken. They are, after all, but the raw material—necessary indeed to the manufactured article, but not the article itself. Whatever mechanical facilities may be devised for the work of transcribing notes, there must necessarily be a continual mental supervision, an intellectual process such as is demanded by every description of skilled labor. The proportion of mechanical to mental effort varies according to circumstances. In some instances, as in the transcription of notes taken slowly from dictation, or of a speech or a sermon deliberately uttered, the style being simple, and the phraseology requiring no alteration, the mechanical element largely prevails, though it would be wrong to suppose that even in this case the mental element is not constantly needed.

In transcribing hastily written notes of a rapid legal argument, or a scientific lecture, or a metaphysical discourse, the demand upon the intellectual faculties is of course considerably increased; and when any special difficulties are experienced, such as a very loose or involved style on the part of the speaker, or an indistinctness of utterance, the task of disentangling confused sentences and supplying the omissions, to say nothing of giving a meaning to ill-shaped symbols, capable of any number of "various readings," involves an amount of mental effort and application little suspected by the uninitiated.

There are many shorthand writers who fail to accomplish this task with the requisite skill; who having, probably with great manual dexterity, taken their shorthand notes, set about the labor of transcribing, troubled with no misgiving as to the

best rendering of complicated sentences, heedless of the most obvious violations of the rules of syntax, anxious only to get through the work as quickly as possible, and then—to send in the bill. But we are not referring to the labors of the careless or the incompetent. We allude to the efforts of the pains-taking, conscientious, and intelligent shorthand writer, in saying that they involve no inconsiderable amount of mental exertion. Nor do we now mean the exertion required in following the speaker, but that which is demanded in producing an accurate and at the same time readable transcript of the notes that have been taken.

The first care of the reporter in transcribing his notes should be to produce an intelligible report; and he will hardly accomplish this unless he himself understands what he writes. If he fails to follow the train of ideas which he has to record, the probability is that more or less of confusion will be observable in his report. He should endeavor to place himself for the time in the position of the speaker, and generally his aim should be to present his report in such a form as the speaker himself would be likely to adopt if he were his own reporter. The extent to which he may depart from the phraseology employed, or omit any of the speaker's words, will greatly depend upon the style of the speaker and the nature of the report required. If he has to supply a full, called by courtesy a verbatim report, he will of course adhere very closely, but not slavishly, to the speaker's words. If a condensed report is needed, he will take greater liberties with the wording of the sentences, and concern himself chiefly with a presentation of the ideas in a concise, intelligible, and grammatical form. In either case, especially in the latter, the manner in which the task is performed will greatly depend upon the reporter's apprehension of the speaker's meaning.

The most absurd mistakes are constantly made from a failure in this respect. It often happens indeed that the failure arises from no fault of the reporter, but from the inherent difficulty of the subject, or the want of perspicuity on the part of the speaker, for which every allowance should be made. A re-

porter can hardly be expected to be encyclopædical in his acquirements, or to have an intuitive perception of ideas on all conceivable subjects when clothed in obscure diction; but he should certainly bring to bear upon his labors a reasonable amount of general knowledge, and a moderate degree of perspicuity, so that he may fairly take in the meaning of what he hears, and present it in an undistorted form to those who depend upon him for their information. The task of the reporter, in transcribing his notes, is not unlike that of the translator, especially in the necessity of an intelligent apprehension of the idea conveyed; and we take it both should be guided to some extent by the same principle. The question which we have no doubt every good translator often mentally puts to himself in the course of his labors is, "How would my author have expressed this idea if he had written in my language instead of his own?" In like manner, the reporter, as we have said, should often seek to put himself in position of the speaker, and give such a rendering of his words as will be best adapted to express the ideas sought to be conveyed.

With regard to the omission of unimportant matter, very much will depend upon whether a full or condensed report is required. In case of a full report it will often be sufficient to omit some of the frequently recurring words at the commencement of sentences, such as "now," "now then," "let me say," etc., which are not noticed in the speaker, but which, when often repeated, greatly mar the effect of a printed speech. In a condensed report the omissions will, of course, be much more extensive. If the speech has to be curtailed—say, to two-thirds or even half its length—it will generally be found possible to accomplish the task by the omission of little more than the superfluous verbiage throughout; but where a speech of an hour's duration has to be compressed within the limits of half a newspaper column a very different style of condensation must be adopted. In this case especially, the reporter must do his best to grasp the general effect of the speech, and present it very much in his own words, retaining the speaker's phraseology only in important passages, which

should be marked at the side at the time of taking the short hand note.

Some reporters content themselves with writing out tolerably fully the first few pages of a speech which they have to condense, and disposing of the remainder in the form of a meagre summary, or even a brief description. This though not an uncommon, is a very unsatisfactory mode of proceeding. The material points of a long speech are not so often found at the beginning as in the middle or towards the end. Some speakers indeed will in a few closing sentences sum up the effect of what they have been saying, and the reporter may advantageously avail himself of any such *resume*.

The power to seize rapidly the main points of a speech, and to express them in suitable language, is one of the most desirable qualifications that a reporter can possess. Like every other faculty it may be greatly improved by exercise. I have known some excellent shorthand writers, not wanting intelligence, who would approach with a feeling of absolute dread the labor of condensing their notes, in the taking of which they had perhaps strained every nerve in order to secure a verbatim report. Accustomed religiously to write out almost every word in the note-book, it seems to them little less than sacrilege to make the wholesale omissions required in a condensed report; and the idea of presenting the speaker's thoughts in any other but his own words, is one from which they instinctively recoil.

On the other hand, the reporter who rarely has to give a verbatim report, and who, in taking notes, habitually drops superfluous or unimportant words or phrases, finds it difficult when required to take an exact note, to abandon the habit he has acquired, and even in following a witness whose evidence he may hereafter have to prove on oath, where verbal accuracy is of the utmost importance, he often finds himself engaged in his familiar work of condensation. It is obvious that the reporter should accustom himself to verbatim note-taking, so as to be qualified to present an exact report if required; and the shorthand writer should now and then diverge from the beaten

track of stenographic precision, so that when he is called upon to supply a condensed note, he may not imitate the raw reporter on the *London Times* who, when desired to compress into half a column notes which would extend double that length, inquired which half he should write !

In transcribing his notes the reporter will often hesitate as to whether he should employ the first or the third person. His decision will generally be influenced by the character of the speech, and the length of the report which he has to supply. Some reporters, indeed, almost invariably employ the third person, even where the verbatim report is required. This practice is open to objections. In the case of a very full report the first person should generally have the preference. Its employment is no obstacle to a moderate degree of condensation, and it has the unquestionable advantage of reality and life; it brings the reader, so to speak, face to face with the speaker, whose individuality is thus preserved. Reading a speech in the third person produces a very different effect from a perusal of the same speech in the first person. It is like the difference between a photograph and a mere verbal description of a person or place. The use of the first person has also the practical advantage of obviating the necessity of repeating the name of the speaker for the sake of clearness, and of changing the tenses.

Where, however, a speech is very clumsily expressed, the reporter, even though condensing but slightly, will naturally prefer to use the third person, the employment of which less restricts him to the diction of the speaker. So when a speech has to be very materially abridged the third person is more appropriate than the first, and is more fair to the speaker. In such a case the use of the first person might convey an incorrect impression, leading the reader to suppose that he was perusing the exact words of the speaker, and not the reporter's *resume*.

The time occupied in transcribing notes will necessarily vary according to circumstances. When a clear note has been taken, and a full report has to be given, an expert long-hand

writer will write twenty "folios" of one hundred words in two hours or less. If the notes require any considerable manipulation, either in the way of condensing or altering, three hours is not an unreasonable time for the same amount of writing.

When pressed for time, the reporter may expedite his labors by dictating to a rapid long-hand writer, or even to two. In the latter case, he should sit between the two writers, and dictate to them from different parts of his notes. Having dictated to one, say eight or ten words, he should make a mark after the last word, so as to catch the eye on again referring to the page; then turning to the other writer, he should read to him the like number of words from another page, marking the last in the same manner. In this way, if the shorthand notes are clearly written, and a full transcript is needed, the dictation may proceed at the rate of about twenty "folios" per hour. This method is not adapted to any other than very full reports, and many reporters would find it irksome to employ it even for these. It requires some practice, and a great readiness in deciphering the shorthand characters.

An easier mode of lessening the mechanical labor of transcribing is by dictating to one or more shorthand assistants. In New York such help is easily obtained; but in smaller cities this is not always the case. A shorthand assistant, to be of real service in this way, should be able to write from dictation at the rate of not less than eighty words a minute, and to transcribe rapidly and accurately. With three or four expert *dictatees* the transcript of a reporter's notes may be greatly facilitated. Where, however, the reporter has no such aid at his command, he is obliged to transcribe his own notes for the press.

In some instances the reporter's notes may be transcribed by another without the necessity of dictation. This, of course, supposes that the note-taker and the transcriber employ the same system, and that the former is an expert and accurate writer. Practically, in newspaper reporting, this method is rarely adopted. In the case of full notes taken by professional

shorthand writers the plan is sometimes pursued, but not so often as that of dictation. Only with slow and accurate speakers can the method be carried out with much advantage.

It has often been a matter of surprise with persons not practically familiar with reporting, that compositors are not taught shorthand, so as to render the transcription of notes into long-hand unnecessary. If it were possible to hand over the shorthand notes to the printers, without the labor of transcribing them, this desideratum would have been long since attained. Except in rare instances it is not possible. As we have already seen, it is seldom that a speech is reproduced precisely in its original form, and few compositors, even if they could read shorthand, would be willing to undertake the recasting of sentences which is necessary with many speakers. In the next place, it is often a difficult matter for the reporter himself to decipher the notes of a rapid speech, and it would be unreasonable to expect a compositor who has not heard the speech to perform the task with satisfaction to himself or others. When, moreover, it is remembered that the notes of a single speech would often have to be distributed among a number of printers, who would each have only a few disconnected sentences to "compose," it is obvious that the sources of error must in this way be greatly multiplied. It is only where the speaker is sufficiently deliberate to admit of the notes being written with care and precision, and so accurate in his style as to need little or no revision, that a transcript by the reporter himself, or from his dictation, can be dispensed with.

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### LONGHAND.

In enumerating the qualifications for a reporter, a clear, legible style of longhand writing has been mentioned. Yet it cannot be said that this is essential, for the majority of reporters write very badly. But that it is highly desirable there can hardly be a question. The urgent demands often made for copy in a newspaper office are not favorable to the devel-

opment of the best style of penmanship, and some excuse should be made for the reporter whose characters get a little straggling towards one or two o'clock in the morning. If, however, he has cultivated the habit of writing legibly, he will rarely, whatever pressure may be put upon him, find himself betrayed into a scrawling style. He may dash along at the top of his speed, he may use numberless abbreviations, he may fail to form letters with exactness; but with all his omissions and variations of outline an unerring instinct will enable him to preserve a degree of legibility in his writing, of which no compositor will complain. In the New York newspaper offices it is not usual for reporters to read the "proofs" of their reports, and even in the country the opportunity of correction is not always afforded; hence, if the handwriting is not tolerably legible, occasional mistakes, and sometimes serious ones, are inevitable. Many clever reporters have lost a valuable engagement solely in consequence of the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of deciphering their copy.

In rapid shorthand writing, the help of the context is constantly needed; but I hold that longhand should be almost independent of such aid. If the young reporter finds that he has acquired a careless and illegible hand, he should for some weeks or months write at half his usual speed, and not be content unless each word can be easily read without reference to the others. Special care should be taken to distinguish m's, n's and u's. This will give a degree of clearness to the writing that will amply compensate for the small amount of extra trouble involved. The distinction is best made by keeping the strokes of *m* and *n* close together, joining them at the top, and taking care to keep the letters well apart from the others. A very common error, which every careful writer will try to avoid, is that of writing *v* like *n*, and *b* like *h*, by bringing the last stroke down to the line instead of keeping it above. Many persons invariably write the letter *r* without the little turn at the top, thus making it resemble the letter *i* without the dot. These faults, combined with a general slovenliness of writing, are enough to make any hand illegible.

As a rule, flourishes should be avoided, and no stroke should be made that is not necessary to legibility. Long tops and tails to letters that go above and below the line are particularly objectionable.

The best style of writing is that used in some of the government offices, which is usually large and clear, a certain number of words being allowed in a line and a certain number of lines in a page. The up and down strokes are nearly of an equal thickness, so that the writing can be easily read at a distance. The clearest style of writing is nearly upright and tolerably round. A very sloping hand is seldom legible.

The method of holding the pen will to some extent determine the character of the writing. The orthodox mode of drawing the elbow close to the side and pointing the pen to the shoulder is simply absurd. The elbow should be at some distance from the side, and the pen should be held rather loosely in the hand in the position most easy and natural to the writer, very much as in drawing. Some persons hold the penholder with the top pointing outwards, while others hold it nearly upright. Some place the pen between the first and second fingers both for long and short hand; this mode is adopted by some good writers. The lines should not be less than three-quarters of an inch apart. If they are closer the writing appears indistinct, and occasional interlineations are not easily made.

#### SPECIAL REPORTING.

In taking notes of a meeting, care should be taken to distinguish the speakers with accuracy. At what is commonly called a "public meeting," where the chairman calls on each speaker, this is an easy matter; but at meetings of deliberative bodies, and public companies, where persons rise, sometimes in rapid succession, and speak from different parts of the room, without any mention being made of their names, it is often very difficult accurately to distinguish them; especially is this the case in an excited conversational discussion in which several speakers take part. The reporter should do his best to make himself acquainted with the persons and the

name of the prominent speakers at the meetings which he is expected to attend, or should take care to sit beside some one who can give him the required information.

The proper orthography of the names is a matter requiring special care on the part of the reporter, who may make an enemy for life of Mr. Smythe, by spelling his name Smith.

In taking notes of set speeches, the name of each speaker should begin a fresh line, and be written in longhand; but in reporting rapid discussions and conversations, the names should be written in shorthand and underlined. The system of writing only the initial letter of the name is objectionable, except in cases where there are only two or three speakers, as in legal trials.

No general rule can be laid down as to the length to which reports of public meetings should extend. This will necessarily depend on the public importance of the proceedings and the space at the reporter's disposal. It is usual to give prominence to the speech of the chairman, especially in the case of a meeting of the shareholders of a public company. The official "report" submitted to the shareholders is generally summarized; in many cases, however, this document has been previously issued, and, either in full or in an abridged form, has appeared in the newspapers, in which cases it is not necessary to repeat it. In reporting the speeches, less attention will, of course, be given to minute financial details than to general principles of management; and if any piquant personal squabbles arise, the public, sometimes with questionable taste, desires to have full information respecting them.

At municipal and other local periodical meeting the speaking is often confined to a comparatively few persons who take a prominent part in all the proceedings. The reporter will report most fully the speakers who have the greatest influence with the public. Some newspapers give the proceedings at meetings of this description at great length, while others report them in a very summary manner. In this, as in other respects, the reporter must of course follow his instructions.

If, however, he does his work well, and obtains the confidence of his employers, very much will probably be left to his own discretion.

Political meetings are usually reported more fully than any others, especial prominence being given to meetings and speakers favorable to the party which the newspaper represents or supports. It is needless to say that the reporter's political opinions—if he has any—should never influence him in the discharge of his duties. He should identify himself, as far as possible, with the paper which he represents, without, however, misrepresenting the opposite side. Few papers report both sides at equal length and with absolute impartiality; and the reporter must be in a measure guided by the known sympathies of his journal, in selecting the speakers to be the most fully reported. This remark applies alike to religion and politics.

It is usual for those who conduct public meetings to hand to the reporters copies of resolutions and other documents; but it sometimes happens that these are not to be obtained, and reporters who possess sufficient skill in shorthand will do well to take them down, and thus render themselves independent of other aid. It is perhaps too much to expect a reporter to take a shorthand note of a long document read at a rapid rate by a valuable secretary; but resolutions, which are commonly short, may be taken down without much labor, and the reporter who has them in his note-book may be spared a good deal of time and labor in endeavoring to obtain copies.

Sometimes an undignified struggle takes place between several reporters for a solitary copy of some document which has been read. It is customary for the fortunate possessor to lend it to his brethren of the press to copy, or to undertake to forward the printed "slips" as soon as it is in type; but an unamiable scribe, representing perhaps some influential paper, will sometimes take possession of every document that is accessible, and decline to render the slightest assistance to his *confreres*. This is very unprofessional, and highly reprehensible; but it is done nevertheless. A habit

of taking down documents of importance may often save the young reporter some mortification. None, however, but a very accurate note-taker will like to rely on his shorthand for documents, quotations, and the like. The ability to secure even these is one of the incidental advantages of great skill in shorthand, and this consideration should stimulate the student to attain, if possible, a high degree of proficiency.

Lectures are not often reported at length in the newspapers. They are generally dismissed in paragraphs of a few lines. Some papers will devote say half a column to an interesting lecture on science or literature. To summarize well a lecture of a technical character is not always easy, and the task requires some knowledge, however superficial, of the subject treated. If it is very abstruse and difficult, it is often better not to make the attempt lest absurd blunders be committed. In the case of such a lecture assistance may be obtained from the lecturer or from some person familiar with the subject.

Public dinners, *dejeuners*, and other entertainments at which speeches are made, are frequently reported at considerable length in newspapers. Tickets are generally forwarded for the reporters, and special accommodation is provided for them. Where this is not the case, the reporter should secure a seat at a table near the chairman, in as central a position as possible; so that he may hear the other speakers. Only in very full reports is it customary to devote more than a few lines to the introductory toasts. The "toast of the evening," generally proposed from the chair, is that to which the reporter mainly devotes his attention. When time is an object, and the report has to be placed in the hands of the printers as soon as possible, the reporter may employ the intervals between the toasts in transcribing his notes.

Before railways intersected the country the reporter needed among his other qualifications that of being a good whip. A drive of ten or twenty miles to a public meeting or a dinner, returning perhaps late at night, was a very common incident in a reporter's life. In the present day it is an exceptional occurrence. Traveling, however, is still a frequent necessity

in connection with newspaper reporting; and hence the art of writing in a railway carriage is an important acquirement for the modern reporter. In the course of a long journey several columns may be written in the train, so that on arriving at the journey's end the MS. is ready to be placed in the printer's hands. The labor is, of course, considerably greater than that which attends ordinary writing; but with a little practice it can be accomplished with more ease than most persons would imagine. It is necessary to provide a book or a flat board on which to write; and if care is taken to sit upright, and not to lean back, or bring the body into contact with the carriage more than is absolutely necessary, no great inconvenience will arise from the oscillation of the train. To avoid the constant looking backwards and forwards between the note book and the transcript, the reporter may take his notes on a larger sized paper than usual, writing only on about a third of each page and leaving the remaining two-thirds for the longhand transcript. A left hand margin may be folded down or ruled off for this purpose. The same arrangement may be adopted with advantage in the case of taking down evidence, or any other form of longhand reporting. The margin then serves the purpose of a notebook wherein to stenograph any important passages which it may be desirable to render verbatim; the corresponding space to the right being left blank for the longhand transcription, which can be filled in at any convenient time.

Reporters on daily papers, whose time is almost entirely occupied with their regular duties in connection with their own journals, have but little opportunity of acting as correspondents to other newspapers; but the reporters engaged on papers that appear only once or twice a week frequently have ample leisure for this additional duty, and their employers rarely offer any objection, so long as the regular work is not neglected.

In addition to their ordinary newspaper work, reporters who are skilled in shorthand are sometimes called upon to report for private individuals, an employment which is usually well remunerated. In many country towns the newspaper re-

porters are the only shorthand writers, and hence they are necessarily applied to when special reports are required of sermons, lectures, public meetings, legal proceedings, government inquiries, and the like. In New York the reporter and the shorthand writer follow distinct professions; the one devoting himself to newspaper work, and the other to private or legal or business engagements. In few provincial towns could the shorthand writer gain a living apart from newspaper engagements.

#### **LEGAL REPORTING.**

In most legal proceedings the evidence of witnesses is required to be given with scrupulous care. The speeches of counsel are not so important; but the summing up or judgment of the judge, recorder, or other president of the tribunal, should receive the attention of the reporter. The transcript of the shorthand notes may probably be referred to in the course of future proceedings, and if they should prove defective and inaccurate, the reporter's reputation may be seriously compromised, or a question may be raised as to the value of a shorthand writer's services in connection with legal inquiries.

It is customary to transcribe the shorthand notes of legal proceedings on foolscap paper. Shorthand writers use a paper specially ruled for the purpose. It has red lines at the right hand side of each page, leaving a margin of about an inch. The ruled blue lines for the writing do not extend beyond the red lines, and there are twenty-five or twenty-six of these in each page. Both sides of the paper are usually written on; the pages are numbered at the bottom; and the day's proceedings are fastened together at the top with tape or patent fastenings and enclosed in a stiff paper cover. The reporter who has not been accustomed to this kind of shorthand writing will probably find himself somewhat embarrassed as to the manner in which the transcript should be made. It is not essential to adhere to any particular form; but for the benefit of those who desire to know the mode usually adopted, we give the opening of an imaginary case as it would be rendered by a professional shorthand writer.

As a reporter is liable to be called upon at any time to give stenographic help in legal cases, a knowledge of legal terms and forms will be of service. These vary in the different States and in different courts, but not to any considerable extent. In most courts where civil causes are tried the party who brings an action against another is called the *Plaintiff*, and the party against whom the action is brought is called the *Defendant*. In the New York Court of Appeals, the appealing party is called the *Appellant*, and the other party the *Respondent*. Wherever a prosecution is brought against any person for crime, it is brought in the name of *The People*. The party who offers a will for probate is called the *Proponent*, and if there is opposition to the terms of the will the party opposing is called the *Contestant*.

On the first page of the Longhand report of a legal case should be written the name of the court in which the case is tried, with the title of the suit and the name of the judge or referee before whom it was tried. If before a jury state that fact. Give also the date of the trial, the names of the counsel, and the names of the parties for whom they severally appear.

The following is one of the most common forms of title page :

U. S. District Court,  
Southern District of New York.

James C. Black <i>vs.</i> Andrew Jackson.	} Before Hon. William Jones and a jury.
---	--

New York, April 9th, 1876.

—Appearances.—  
For Plaintiff,

Charles Jeffreys, Esq

For Defendant,

Caleb L. Morris, Esq.

—Index.—

	Direct.	Cross.
Thomas Smith,	page 2,	page 9.
Abner Macy,	" 13,	" 16.

The Stenographer may also put at the bottom of the title page his own name and business card.

It is understood that reports of legal proceedings are made on legal-cap paper, which has a marginal red line running lengthwise the paper about an inch from the left hand edge. When commencing to write the examination of a witness, first put the full name in a plain bold hand, beginning it just outside the margin line. When written, underscore it with two lines. Then state for which party that witness was called; state that he or she was duly sworn or affirmed, and then give the name of the counsel who conducts the examination. Examination by the counsel for the party on whose behalf a witness is called is called *direct*, and examination by an opposing counsel is called *cross-examination*. Each question and answer should be preceded by the letters Q or A. The Q should always be written on the margin to the left of the red line. The A may be written in the same way, but to economize space, the A, with the reply of the witness, is frequently written on the same lines, beginning after the question has been written out, and going on through succeeding lines until it is finished.

The following form shows this method of writing out question and answer, also the mode of recording interruptions, objections, questions by the judge, who is termed "The Court," etc.:

*Joseph Murray, called on behalf of plaintiff, being  
duly sworn, testified as follows:*  
*Direct examination by Mr. Hayes.*

Q. Where do you reside? A. In New York, at 329 Kelley street

Q. What is your occupation? A. I am book-keeper for Wells & Cottrél, 87 John street.

Q. Do you know either of the parties to this suit? A. I know Daniel Wilder.

Q. Do you know Ellen H. Wilder? A. Very well.  
(*By the Court.*) Tell the date of your first acquaintance with Daniel Wilder? A. I think it was in 1869.

(*By the Court.*) Give the exact date as near as you can? A. It was some time in September, 1869.

*By Mr. Hayes.* Were you present at the marriage ceremony between Daniel and Ellen Wilder?

[Objected to as irrelevant. Objection overruled. Deft. excepts.]

A. I was not present.

*Cross-examination by Mr. Lowe.*

Q. Did you see Daniel Wilder shortly before his voyage to Europe in 1871? A. About two weeks before I think.

Q. At what place? A. At the Windsor Hotel.

Q. (*By Mr. Hayes.*) Did you meet him by appointment or accidentally? A. By appointment.

The reporter should endeavor while engaged in stenographing a legal proceeding to take his notes as near as possible in the form in which he wishes it to appear when transcribed. This will save much time in preparing the longhand transcript, which is by far the most laborious part of the reporter's work.

### REPORTING AS A MENTAL EXERCISE.

If we consider the mental and mechanical operations which are carried on during the act of taking down a speaker's words in shorthand, we shall not be surprised that long and diligent practice is needed for the acquisition of the art of verbatim reporting; our wonder will rather be that still greater labor and skill are not necessary to the carrying on of a process so rapid and yet so complicated.

Let us suppose that a speaker commences his address. He utters a few words slowly and deliberately; they fall on the reporter's ear, and are thence communicated to the brain as the organ of the mind; and the writer must then recall to his memory the sign for each word he has heard; the proper symbol being present to his mind, a communication is made from the brain to the fingers which, obedient to cerebral impulse, and trained perhaps to the nicest accuracy of delineation, rapidly trace the mystic lines on the paper. Some portion of time is of course, required after the words have been spoken, for each of these operations to be performed; yet see! the

writer appears to stop precisely at the same time as the speaker. The orator continues his deliberate utterance, and the writer is able to stenograph each word before the next is articulated. Now, however, the speaker warms with his subject, and changes his measured pace for one more rapid; the writer increases his speed accordingly, and notwithstanding the many operations at work in his mind, scarcely is the last word of a sentence uttered before he lifts his pen from the paper, as if for a moment's rest, not a syllable having escaped him. This surely is a laborious task; still more so that which follows. The speaker has finished his exordium, is in the midst of his discourse, and has begun his flights of oratory. Listen to his next sentence. He begins in a low tone and with measured pace; after a few words he makes a sudden pause; and then, as if inspired by a sudden influx of thoughts, and fearful lest they should escape before he can give them utterance, he dashes along with an impetuosity which is never diminished till he is out of breath with exertion. In this rapid delivery he has gained ground to the extent of six or eight words or more on the writer, whom, it may be, he has taken by surprise. The latter has had to listen to the words which were in advance of him, recall the proper sign for each, send it from the brain to the fingers, and trace it on his note-book, while at the same time he has had to attend to the words which follow, so as to be able to dispose of them in the same way when their turn arrives. In this manner his mental and bodily powers are occupied for an hour, or perhaps many hours together.

It might naturally be supposed that, with all this to attend to, it would be impossible for the reporter to think of the sense conveyed by the words which he is at such pains to record; but to perform his work efficiently he must bring his mind to bear on this also, and endeavor not only to understand the general drift of what he is reporting, but to catch the meaning of every expression; for where this is neglected, literary accuracy cannot be attained. The probability is that we do not distinctly hear, (hear, that is, so as to be able separately to

identify them) more than half the sounds composing the words to which we listen; and it is only by our attention to the context that we are enabled to supply imperceptibly—for few persons are conscious of this mental act—the sounds which the ear has failed to convey definitely to us. Hence the necessity for listening to the sense as well as to the sound of words as they flow from a speaker's lips. In the report of a sermon, the words "the siege of Abimelech," were written and printed "the siege of Limerick." In like manner "the county surveyor" has been transformed into "the countess of Ayr." These errors could not have arisen from a mistake in the written characters, for the forms in either case would, in any stenographic system, be sufficiently dissimilar; the ear must have been misled by a similarity of sound, and the sense should have led to the correction of the mistake. Every experienced reporter must occasionally have discovered errors of this description, while transcribing his notes; his inattention to the sense, while following the speaker, not having led him to correct the false impression made on the ear.

As a mental exercise, then, reporting may be regarded as of great utility. It is true that after a long course of practice, the art becomes apparently a mechanical one, as far as the taking down is concerned; yet at first all the powers of the mind must be brought to bear on its attainment, and they can hardly fail to be strengthened by the training they must undergo. Reporting has often been called a mere mechanical operation. It may indeed become such; that is, if *any* operation to which mental action in some form is essential can be called mechanical; but no reporter who pursues his occupation in this spiritless manner can hope to attain any eminence in his profession. Even if the act of writing should, by practice, become little more than a skilful mechanical performance, the constant employment of the mind in catching the meaning of different speakers, the becoming familiar with the various styles of diction in use among them, together with the exercise in composition afforded by the transcribing of what has been written, cannot fail to commend the art to all who are interested in the development of the mental powers. If the

student of shorthand has been unable to acquire sufficient manual dexterity to follow a speaker verbatim, or if though a verbatim writer, he is required to supply only condensed reports, the practice will still be beneficial, since increased attention to the sense will be required, in order that when abridging a report, nothing material may be omitted. A habit will thus be cultivated of separating mere verbiage from the solid material, winnowing the chaff from the wheat; and though this is not the particular benefit on account of which the cultivation of shorthand is here recommended, its importance ought not to be overlooked in regarding reporting as a mental exercise.

#### MISCELLANEOUS HINTS TO REPORTERS.

Never take notes behind a speaker if it can possibly be avoided. Endeavor to secure a seat in front. At public meetings, if the reporter's table is behind or too much at the side, see the managers, and endeavor to obtain a more satisfactory arrangement. In church, avoid the gallery, unless you know that it is suitable. The best place is immediately under or a little in front of the pulpit. In taking notes of a law case, the best place is usually between the judge and the jury, where the summing up may be distinctly heard. Some reporters' boxes are placed immediately under the jury-box, and this is generally a good arrangement.

Take care that you have sufficient paper for your report. On going to a meeting, do not put a note-book into your pocket without previously examining it, or you may find to your mortification that you have taken a book already filled with notes. If you write with a pen, do not trust to the chance of being provided with ink at the reporter's table. Ink so supplied is generally too thick for use.

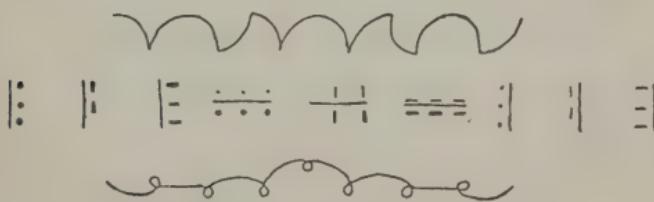
It is well to keep note-books for some time, say a year or two, before destroying them. The reporter is sometimes called upon to verify his reports in a court of law; and the production of the original notes is occasionally demanded. Professional shorthand writers number their books consecutively, and write on the cover of each a table of contents. Reporters

might adopt the same course with advantage. The tables of contents may be transcribed into a book for facility of reference.

Always be willing to give a helping hand to a fellow reporter, unless duty to others imperatively require a refusal. When several reporters are engaged at the same table, what one has missed another may have caught; and only a churlish spirit will refuse to exchange civilities with the rest. It is scarcely to be expected that a skilful shorthand writer should "read over" with an incompetent one; but if he has a friendly disposition he will not be unwilling to give his brethren some of the benefit of his superior skill. Never "snub" a young hand, unless he is unbearably conceited. Remember your own early days.

Avoid anything like assumption. The young reporter is apt to be very sensible of his own importance as a "representative of the press," and to give himself airs accordingly. Let him go about his work modestly as well as energetically, and he will be far more likely to succeed than he will by an offensive display of assurance or an assumption of superiority.

Do all you can, by upright dealing and gentlemanly conduct, to maintain the respectability of your profession.—*From Reed's "Reporter's Guide."*



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